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PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION FOR
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To have been educated and brought up in the ancient capital of Canada should have been of especial advantage to Mr. Chauveau ; for the charming surroundings of that charming locality are well calculated to call into play the light and fanciful, as well as the more severe and exact qualities of his mind. Sentiment and poetry, in a very marked way, are enfolded with the fibres of his thoughts, and frequently interlace the utterances of his lips. They cross and re-cross one another like the shuttle of a skilful weaver, and impart, we scarcely know by what process, a camera-like colouring to his mental fabric, which is sometimes peculiar, sometimes capricious, but always attractive. If however the woof of his character is variable in its hues, the warp is fast, and we may add distinctly dyed with the "true blue" tints of his nationality. With a mind naturally inclined to sympathise with external objects, Mr. Chauveau's lot has been cast in the midst of objects calculated to stimulate such sympathy. The place of his birth, to an unusual extent, is associated with history and fable, with truth and fiction, with strife and faith. It is, comparatively speaking, rich in historic treasure ; for the archives of Quebec contain curious chronicles, while its colleges have produced enthusiastic scribes. Besides being in the highest degree picturesque, the environs of that city may, so to speak, be regarded as living witnesses as well as silent monuments of the past. The

mountains which surround the quaint, old, half-modern and half-middle-age place, like grave old chancellors in brown and white wigs, look as if they were the accredited keepers of the rolls and muniments, the actual history, and the pleasant legends of the past. The lakes which, mirror-like, gleam among the hills, smile misleading smiles, as if their dimpled faces could, if they liked, shadow forth other and brighter objects than the grim and solemn mountains by which they are enclosed. The shores which fringe those crystal basins, and the rivers which flow into them, have been used as the highways of some curious and some heroic exploits, while the plains which stretch beyond their margins may be regarded as the tablets whereon strange records are inscribed. Within the three centuries since the adventurous sailor of St. Malo's took possession of the country in the name of his sovereign, and planted the cross on the banks of the St. Charles, in the name of his Saviour, many deeds have been done to interest the historian and move the poet. In one place such facts are written by the hand of war in the rough characters of blood; in another they are pointed with the finger of faith in the sacred cyphers of Christianity. Here they instruct us how multitudes were dispersed by the sword, and there they inform us how tribes were attracted by the cross. They tell us, too, how people who were irreconcilable enemies in Europe, have lived together happily as friends in America, and how men who might not without peril worship at different altars in the old world, have done so in the new without fear either of the faggot or the cord. Moreover, Quebec proper is in itself a place of pleasant contrasts, as well as of curious contradictions. It is an old world city in a new world country; a fortress and a mart; a depot for arms and an emporium for trade; and to complete the paradox it is the peaceful abode of races whom war had separated for centuries.

Few cities says, Mr. Marmier, in his letters from America in 1860, offer as many striking contrasts as Quebec, a fortress and a commercial city together built upon

the summit of a rock as the nest of an eagle, while her vessels are everywhere wrinkling the face of the Ocean, an American city inhabited by French colonists, governed by England, and garrisoned by Scotch regiments; a city of the middle ages by most of its ancient institutions, while it is regulated by all the combinations of modern constitutional government; an European City by its civilization and its habits of refinement, and still close by the remnants of the Indian tribes and the barren mountains of the north; a city with about the same latitude as Paris, while successively combining the torrid climate of southern regions with the severities of an hyperborean winter, a city at the same time Catholic and Protestant, where the labours of our Missions are still uninterrupted alongside of the undertaking of the Bible Society, and where the Jesuits driven out of our own country find a place of refuge under the aegis of British puritanism."

Such are the physical, social, and political attractions of the city wherein Mr. Chauveau was born on the 30th May, 1820. His ancestors for generations had resided at Charlesbourg near Quebec, where, as we have reason to infer, they were respected and influential. Perchance they were connected with the "brave Pierre Chauveu," whom Champlain left to govern the colony, when he embarked for France in the year 1610. Mr. Chauveau's father died when the subject of this sketch was very young, and perhaps to this seeming misfortune may be attributed the fact of his having been withdrawn from rural occupations and brought up to professional life under the direction of his uncle, who seems to have acted in the capacity of a friend as well as of a guardian. He was educated at the seminary of Quebec, where, as we have been informed, he attracted a good deal of notice. On leaving college he was articled as a law student, in the first instance to Messrs. Hamel and Roy, and subsequently to Mr. O'Kill Stuart, of Quebec, with whom he completed his indentures of service. The incipient yearnings of his nature made themselves conspicuous in the early part of his career when he gave the rein to literature and placed the curb in law. In his eighteenth year, when youths very commonly rattle jingles, or cap rhymes, he sent poetical contributions to *Le Canadien* newspaper, which were of sufficient merit in the opinion of the fastidious editor to find a place in its columns.

After attaining his majority, he glided from poetry to politics and became the correspondent of *Le Courrier des Etats-Unis*, then and now published at New-York, as well as an occasional contributor to other less known publications. His letters as we learn were copied into *Le Canadien* as well as other papers published in the French language and were criticized with some care by the readers, but with no loss of repute to the writer. Indeed they became his "letters of credit," and were honored as such by his countrymen when the proper time came.

That time arrived in the autumn of 1844. Having disagreed with and dismissed his advisers, Lord Metcalfe dissolved the Parliament and appealed to the people. The Hon. D. B. Viger had supported Lord Metcalfe, and the Hon. John Neilson, who was the attached friend of Mr. Viger, though he had declined office, was suspected of sympathizing in the sentiments which his venerable friend cherished towards the benevolent Governor General. As in 1834, Mr. Neilson's moderation had caused him the loss of his election for the county of Quebec, so in 1844 a somewhat similar line of action moved that large constituency to transfer to his youthful rival, Mr. Chauveau, the trust which they had for so long a time reposed in him, for the latter was elected by a majority exceeding one thousand votes.

The position taken by the French Canadian party was very embarrassing to the administration of the day. Almost all the representatives from Upper Canada supported Lord Metcalfe, while those from Lower Canada took sides with his dismissed advisers. Thus was the united province governed by means so thoroughly sectional as to be hurtful and to appear scandalous. In 1846 the present Chief Justice Draper, at that time the Attorney General for Canada West, in a clever, albeit a decidedly diplomatic, and a somewhat hazy way, endeavored to attract the Canadian party by appealing through Mr. Caron, to its chief, Mr. Lafontaine, for assistance in carrying on the government. The effort resulted in failure, and

Mr. Draper soon afterwards retired from the administration. In the following year Mr. Cayley sought to break the Canadian phalanx by appealing to Mr. Caron in the hope apparently of attaching the Quebec section of the party to the conservative party of the Western Province. The negotiation did not succeed at the time, but it was not without influence on some who took no part in it. The idea enunciated in those letters fell like yeast in the conservative element, which is more or less latent in all minds, and in due time set it rising, albeit the result was probably delayed by the determination of Mr. Cayley and his colleagues to dissolve the Parliament and appeal to the people.

The result was fatal to the government, for their party was utterly routed at the polls in both sections of the Province. Thus when Mr. Lafontaine was called upon to form an administration in 1848, he was strong enough, so it was alleged, to have done so without paying any special compliment to the Quebec section of his supporters. Whether any slight was actually offered to those supporters we have no means of knowing, but for some reason with which we are unacquainted, Mr. Chauveau occasionally voted with Mr. Papineau and against Mr. Lafontaine.

On the 12th November, 1851, on the reconstruction of the government consequent on the retirement of Messrs. Lafontaine and Baldwin, Mr. Chauveau was appointed under the Hincks-Taché administration, Solicitor-General for Lower Canada, and on the 31st August, 1853, he was preferred to the higher office of Provincial Secretary with a seat in the Executive Council. The latter office he resigned in January, 1855, when he retired with Mr. Morin from the administration. In July of the same year, he was in succession to Dr. Meilleur, appointed Chief Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, an office which he still continues to fill, and for the duties of which he has sought to qualify himself by foreign travel and by closely observing the educational systems

of the continent of Europe as well as those of the British Islands and of the United States of America.

The duties of Chief Superintendent of Education under the most favorable circumstances are not, we venture to think, easily discharged, but in a community of mixed races, of different languages and of antagonistic forms of religious faith, where men are on the alert to discover concealed leanings, to detect latent weaknesses, or to descry hidden faults, it is almost a matter for surprise that they are discharged at all. That Mr. Chauveau has been able to perform such duties with credit and satisfaction, is of itself no small matter for congratulation. The fact may be accepted as an evidence that those essential administrative qualities, wisdom, temper and discretion are never absent from his mind or from his office. Of a sensitive, and as we should conjecture, of an impulsive temperament, Mr. Chauveau has nevertheless had the sagacity to discipline his thoughts to patience, and though he may occasionally have been tempted to be partial, he has always so far as we are informed, shewn the courage to be just. The Chief Superintendent of Education is rather the moderator for a Province than the minister of a party, and, therefore, his proceedings should be conducted with the fairness of a judge rather than with the feelings of a politician. The equitable habit of thought which is inseparable from a proper conduct of affairs has enabled Mr. Chauveau to distinguish between prejudice and wrong, while his position and force of character have given him the opportunity, directly or indirectly, to allay the former with an explanation, and to remove the latter by law. Mr. Chauveau has continued to fill this important office from 1855 to the present time. Its difficult duties have become easy and agreeable to him, and we only repeat the common opinion, in saying that he has by his discharge of those duties, justified the selection which the ministers of the Crown made when they recommended his appointment. In striving to deserve success, men may occasionally command it. Mr. Chauveau has,

we think, thus striven. He has done more than his duty, for he has not been content to perform only the minimum amount of work which his office requires; on the contrary, he has labored with enthusiasm as well as industry, to be generally useful as well as actually efficient. If we would read the history of his exertions, we must do so not only in the records of his office; in his numerous contributions to contemporary literature; in his *Journal of Education*; and in the *School history of Lower Canada*; but in those outside and extraneous efforts with which his career is conspicuously marked. As in the case of Mr. D'Arcy McGee, so also in that of Mr. Chauveau,—where speeches are to be made, essays to be prepared, or papers to be read, the English speaking part of the community seem, as a matter of course, to call on the former, while the French speaking portion of the community pay the like compliment to the latter. In both cases they appear to suppose that gifted men are like musical boxes, who can involuntarily, and without preparation, in obedience to a sign, or in answer to a touch, charm, amuse and instruct any number of all sorts of people.

Like other men in official station Mr. Chauveau has found recreation as well as pleasure in that particular kind of literature which English statesmen have occasionally chosen as a popular channel for conveying political opinions, or for advancing party interests. Thus, in 1853 he published an exceedingly presentable and well got up novel, entitled *Charles Guérin roman de mœurs Canadiennes*. A work of fiction of such pretence was a novelty in the Province. It was naturally received with favor in Canada. In France it was read with avidity and pronounced by the critics to be an exceedingly good book. He also wrote a narrative of the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to British North America, which was pleasant to read and picturesque to look at, for it was studded with illustrations.

As a speaker Mr. Chauveau is a fair Parliamentary debater,

always fluent and sometimes impassioned. He is naturally decorous and conciliatory, never prosy, and generally attractive. As a speaker out of parliament he is known and appreciated for the felicity of his efforts. He was, as we think, eloquent and happy when he spoke at Montreal on the tercentenary of Shakspeare's birth; and on the other hand he was more eloquent than happy when he delivered his oration over the grave of his friend the author of the history of Canada. In making the comparison the fact should not be overlooked that in the former case his thoughts were under the influence of reason, controlled by a criticism that was iced and clarified in the common refrigeratory of three centuries, but in the latter they were directed by affection too sincere to be critical;—too ardent to be chilled within the interval of a few days. The subject in the one case was, so to speak, "a storied urn or a monumental bust" and in the other a friend who might have been dearer than a brother, a friend, too, whose death was so recent that he had scarcely lost the lineaments of life. When our human instincts are deeply stirred the words in which sorrow finds expression may neither be wise nor well chosen. But when grief has ceased to be recent, and reflection has succeeded feeling, it is probable that our judgment will be found in harmony with the common judgment of men, and we shall shrink dissatisfied from a ceremony which includes the substitution of panegyric for prayer. Doubtless we may excuse, but it is difficult to admire the "voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely" when that voice attunes itself to the soft syllables of flattery, and at the very mouth of the grave, drops the honied words of compliment into the "dull cold ear of death."

In the month of August, 1867, after Mr. Cauchon had discovered that the duty of forming an administration for the Province of Quebec was attended with unforeseen difficulties, he at once resigned the task. Whereupon the public mind concurred with the ministerial mind in suggesting that Mr. Chauveau should be invited to undertake the responsibility. The negotiations were

successfully carried out, and the administration, of which he is now the chief, was speedily announced in the *Canada Gazette*.

Great changes have passed over the Province since Mr. Chauveau retired from the government in 1855. Though removed by the duties of his office from active participation in political affairs, he nevertheless is much too thoughtful and patriotic in disposition and character, to have been an indifferent or an unobservant spectator of the drama which was passing before him. Scene succeeded scene, and act followed act; the past with all its contrarities, picturesque enough when viewed through the charities of memory; and the future with all its uncertainties, still bright enough to be garlanded with the pleasures of hope. Thus the curtain fell on the imposing tableau of the Delegates in council; and thus the old Province of Canada, with its pleasant recollections and unpleasant regrets, like a dissolving view, melted away in light. It concerns those who are now high in station and great in influence, who are the builders, if not the architects, of the new Dominion, to see to it that that light does not become darkness. It concerns them to study very patiently the new problem of union in all its aspects, moral and religious, political and commercial, social and economical, for it should be the chief aim of the patriot and the chief duty of the statesmen to knit and bind together the various parts of our mixed population in one perfect and, if possible, symmetrical whole. It is true policy as well as true wisdom, to remember that the first condition of national stability and strength must be sought for in the union of the people which constitute the nation; not in a geographical union of territories merely, but in an actual union of sections and races also. Intangible lines of latitude and longitude will be found alike weak and worthless, if the hearts and minds of the people which those lines enclose, be not drawn together by the stronger chords of interest and affection. "Oh statesmen! guide us, guard us!" By every patriotic consideration, by the responsibilities of your position; the treasures of

your experience, the power of your eloquence ; and the force of your example ; by every influence you can exert, and by every lesson you can impart, teach us the higher law ; teach us by what process time should sweeten memory, and in what way those roots of bitterness which flourished in the past, may be buried in the future ; teach us what we " owe to our new born nation ;" for be well assured that by means of the littleness that is latent in our nature, by the passions that corrupt, and the prejudices that control us, we shall discover without teaching what is due to our section or to our race.